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ABSTRACT

The goals of the Working Conditions Project were to collect information about child care center staff members and administration in Washtenaw County, Michigan; to identify sources of job satisfaction; and to report administrative practices associated with high commitment to a center by its staff. Results showed that more than 75 percent of the teachers and directors were college graduates and nearly 50 percent of the staff members had high levels of coursework related to child care. The average wage was $6.18 per hour, with few fringe benefits. Child care professionals were paid approximately one-half the salaries of public school teachers with comparable levels of education. Nearly all respondents enjoyed their work, although most staff members worked overtime several hours each week for which they were not paid and did not have breaks (as mandated by law). The majority had been employed at their present workplace for 2 years or less. Major differences existed among various types of programs or sponsorships. Financial subsidies to center budgets were strongly related to better wages, benefits, and working conditions. Several administrative practices related to job commitment were identified. This document includes (1) a summary of the major findings, (2) a fact sheet about child care in Michigan, (3) other related material, and (4) the final report of the findings. (RH)

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Child Care Staff Working Conditions Project

A Task Force of the Washtenaw County Association for the Education of Young Children

Summary of the Project

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Child Care Staff Working Conditions Project

A Task Force of the Washtenaw County Association for the Education of Young Children

Summary of Major Findings

ABSTRACT

The goals of the Working Conditions Project* were to collect information about child care center staff members and administration in Washtenaw County, Michigan, to identify sources of job satisfaction, and to report administrative practices which are associated with high staff commitment to a center.

Results showed that more than three-quarters of the teachers and directors were college graduates. Nearly half of all staff members including assistants had high levels of child-care related coursework. The average wage was $6.18 per hour ($5.62 median), with few fringe benefits. Child care professionals were paid approximately one-half the salaries of public school teachers with comparable levels of education. Most staff members worked several hours of unpaid overtime per week, did not have breaks (even when mandated by law), and had been employed by their present centers for two years or less. Paradoxically, they were nearly unanimous in enjoying their work with young children as well as parents. Major differences existed among various types of programs or sponsorships. Financial subsidies to center budgets were strongly related to better wages, benefits, and working conditions. Several administrative practices related to job commitment were identified.

This study is one of the first to survey all the staff members and centers in a community, rather than a sample of a larger population. It is unique in its findings about job satisfaction and commitment.

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Concern about the quality of child care gives rise to concern about the quality of child care employees. But recent and accurate information is lacking about even the most fundamental characteristics of this occupational group. Who are child care professionals? How well trained are they? What are their salaries and benefits? How much staff turnover is there? How do different types of programs differ in these variables? How satisfied are child care employees with their jobs, and what aspects of job satisfaction relate to commitment to their centers or to searching for other jobs?

These questions and others provided impetus for the Child Care Staff Working Conditions Project. They reflect the growing recognition that attracting and retaining competent staff members is essential to quality in child care. We know from personal experience that there is currently an exodus from the field of good teachers and directors, who love their jobs. We are concerned that the recruits who replace them will not be equally talented and dedicated. The importance of the availability of qualified caregivers will continue to grow as the numbers of working parents increases.

This study of child care centers and their employees was conducted in Washtenaw County, Michigan, in 1984. Each of the 83 licensed day care centers and nursery schools was invited to participate. This population included the cities of Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti, and the smaller towns of Chelsea, Saline, Dexter, Milan, Manchester, and Whitmore Lake.

Two written questionnaires were used. One asked teaching staff and directors about their jobs, salaries, and worklife. The other asked administrators about the financial and personnel policies of the centers.

Seventy-one centers (86%) participated in the study, as did 277 (81%) of the teachers and directors in those centers. The study findings are more representative of non-profit centers, because only 10 of 21 (48%) for-profit centers responded -- though the non-responding centers were basically similar to the participating for-profit centers.

It is intended that this information be used by child care professionals, parents, policy makers, and the general public in efforts to improve the compensation, status, and working conditions of child care employees.

* Funding for the Working Conditions Project, a task force of the Washtenaw County Association for the Education of Young Children (AEYC), was received from National AEYC, Michigan AEYC, Washtenaw County AEYC, and the Ann Arbor Area Foundation through a grant to the Child Care Coordinating and Referral Service. Generous contributions were made by Lynn Dielman from the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research, for data analysis, and Group 243 Design, for graphic services and printing. Additional assistance in research design was provided by John Clement from the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation. See the last page for more information about the Project.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

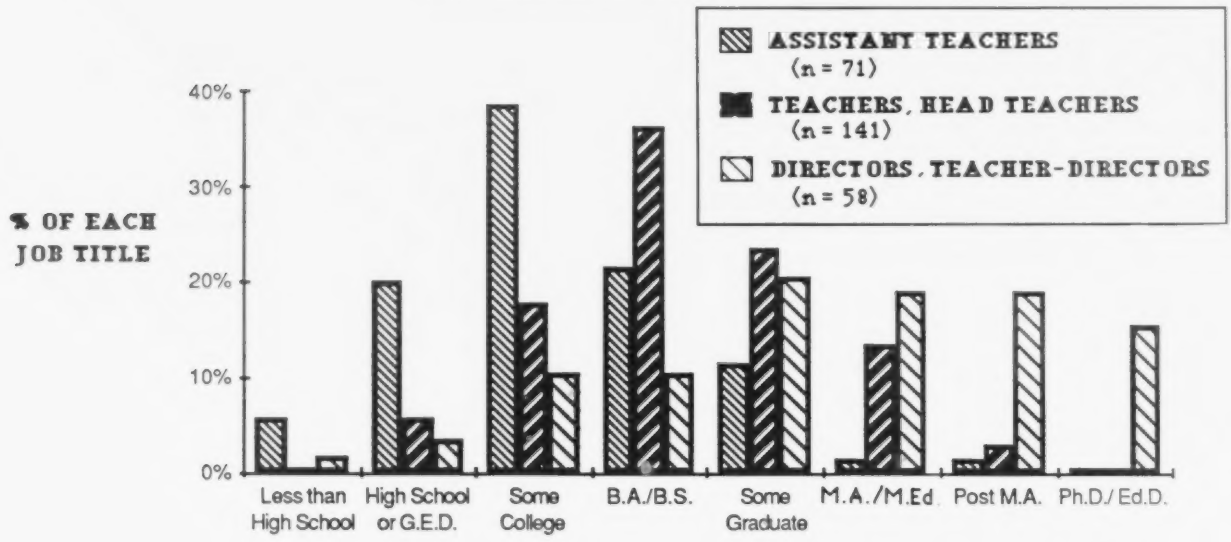
JOB TITLE	#	%
Assistant Teachers	73	27%
Teachers	**141**	**52%**
Teacher-Directors	32	12%
Directors	26	10%
Total in Study	277	100%

SEX	
women	92%
men	8%

AGE	
under 30	48%
30-45	36%
over 45	16%

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EDUCATION OF STAFF MEMBERS AND THEIR JOB TITLES



* The n's in this study vary slightly on each measure, depending on how many people answered the particular question.

DEGREES AND CERTIFICATION

B.A. or higher: 76% of Teachers; 85% of Directors and Teacher-Directors
M.A. or higher: 47% of Directors and Teacher-Directors
Elementary Teacher's Certificate: 42% of all staff
Early Childhood Certification: 23% of all staff
Child Dev't Associate (C.D.A.): 7% of all staff

Note: The level of education in Washtenaw County is higher than the national average for child care professionals as well as the general population.

LEVEL OF EDUCATION RELEVANT TO CHILD CARE

High - 48%: At least a 4-year college degree with relevant major (Early Childhood Ed.; Elementary Ed. with Early Childhood Endorsement; or Home Economics-Child Development). OR a college degree with coursework in 3 areas related to child care.
Medium- 30%: Coursework in at least two areas related to child care.
Low - 15%: Coursework in at least one area related to child care.
None - 7%: No education related to child care.

Note: According to other studies, relevant education is more related to quality of care than is general education.

WAGES

CHILD CARE CENTER HOURLY WAGES COMPARED TO PUBLIC SCHOOL HOURLY SALARIES

Note: All salary figures should be increased by 6.1 % to adjust for inflation through May, 1986.

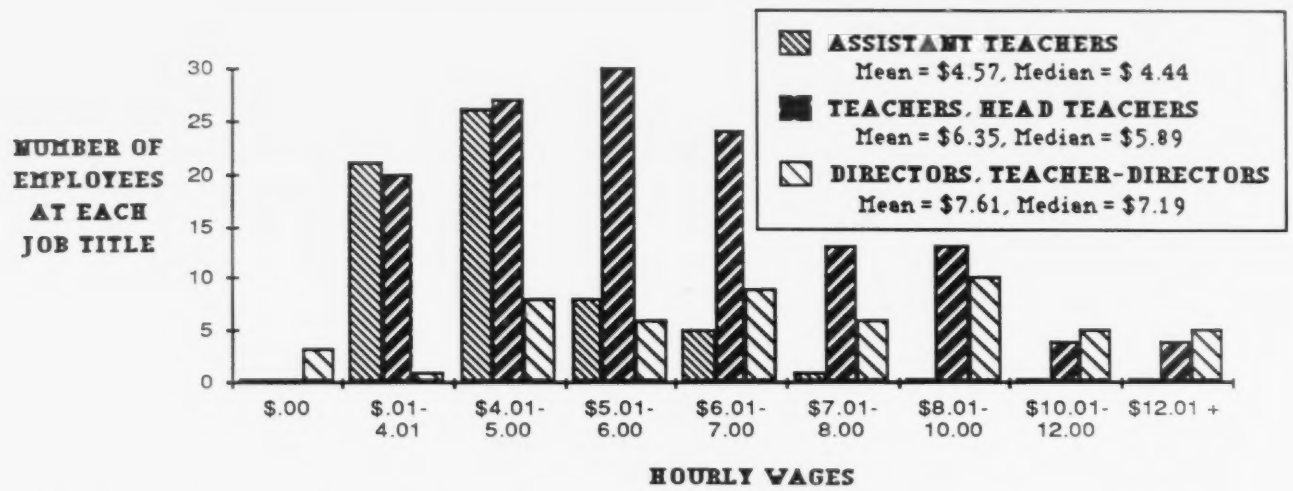
	Average for Center Staff	Wage Range for Public School Teachers at Same Level of Education*
Less than High School	$ 4.80	
High School/G.E.D.	$ 5.00	
Some College/A.A.	$ 5.02	
B.A./B.S.	**$5.66**	**$ 9.98 - 18.09**
Some Graduate	$ 6.55	
M.A./M.Ed.	**$8.55**	**$11.96 - 21.59**
Ph.D/Ed.D.	$10.44	$12.62 - 23.72

* Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti Public School teachers' salaries (administrators' salaries not included)

AMOUNT OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME FROM CHILD CARE

1/4 or less	**51%**
About 1/2	19%
About 3/4	9%
Most	21%

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOURLY WAGES AND JOB TITLE



Note: Salary data have sometimes been used to justify low wages. Even the better child care wages are low when compared to the wages for positions requiring comparable training and responsibilities.

FRINGE BENEFITS

(% of All Staff Members)

	No Benefit	Partially Paid by Employer	Paid by Employer
Health Insurance*	**57%**	14%	29%
Vacation Days*	**52%**	18% (1-9 days/yr.)	25% (10 or more days/yr.)
Paid Holidays	**42%**	47% (1-9 days/yr.)	12% (10 or more days/yr.)
Sick Days	**28%**	25% (less than 1/mo.)	47% (1 or more days/mo.)
Retirement	**80%**	20%	0%

* Note that these percentages differ from those listed on the chart of Center Characteristics. These are the percentages of staff members who receive benefits. The others are the percentages of centers which pay benefits.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Unpaid Overtime/Week*		Hours of Paid Work/Wk		Breaks (if working more than 4 hours/day)		Written Policies	
11+ hours per week	**19%***	40 hours or more	40%			No job description	46%
7-10 hours per week	19%*	30-39 hours	17%	**No breaks****	**57%**	No contract	70%
4-6 hours per week	21%	20-29 hours	18%	No lunch break	52%	No evaluation policy	48%
1-3 hours per week	24%	Less than 20 hours	25%				
No unpaid overtime	18%						

* Most overtime at upper-level jobs

** Breaks are mandated by Federal law for shifts of 4 hours or more.

EXPERIENCE AND STAFF TURNOVER

	0-2 yrs.	3-4 yrs.	5-9 yrs.	10 yrs. or more
Experience at center	**56%***	18%	21%	6%
Experience in field	32%	18%	34%	17%

	yes	no	unsure
Expect to stay in center 2 years	36%	31%	33%
Expect to stay in field 2 years	65%	10%	25%

* The finding that most employees have been on their jobs for two years or less suggests a high rate of staff turnover.

JOB SATISFACTION

To determine how people felt about their jobs, we asked them to agree or disagree with several statements related to job satisfaction. Following are some of the more dramatic findings, in percent of staff members who agreed with the statements:

I like my present job.	95%	I am looking for an entirely different type of job to improve my salary.	25%
I feel committed to my center.	87%	I gain personal satisfaction from interacting with children.	99%
I feel my present salary is adequate.	36%	I gain personal satisfaction from interacting with parents.	96%
I like my present opportunity to progress in salary.	35%		
My present benefits are satisfactory.	38%		

JOB COMMITMENT

Employees' commitment to their present jobs was measured by averaging their agreement or disagreement with three statements: "I feel committed to my center"; "I am not looking for another job to improve my salary"; and "I am not looking for another job to improve my working conditions." Just as commitment is related to the following statements, lack of commitment is related to disagreement with those statements. The following relationships were found to be highly related to commitment to one's present job. (In parentheses are Pearson r correlations. Although significance levels are usually applied to sample data only, it is interesting to note that the significance levels of these correlations range from .0001 to .0000001.)

ITEMS RELATED TO JOB COMMITMENT

I like my present job (.55)
I feel intellectually stimulated in my job (.53)
I like the administrative set-up in my school (.49)
I have a great deal of influence on center policy (.45)
I like my present opportunity for taking responsibility (.44)
I like the flexibility and autonomy of my job (.42)
I like my present work schedule (.39)
I have good communication with the board/owner(.38)
I feel that there is enough support staff at mycenter(.38)
I have opportunities to progress in salary (.33)
I am informed about what goes on in the center (.31)

See the Conclusions for a discussion of how this information can be used in efforts to reduce staff turnover.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHILD CARE CENTERS

Analysis of the characteristics of child care centers in this population showed that the largest differences among centers are related to differences in program type or sponsorship. There are five distinct types of program: public programs; co-operatives, religious centers, other non-profits; and for-profit centers. The two charts below present financial and administrative information about the centers. The top row on each chart shows averages for all centers. The other rows show the averages within each program type. Four centers which did not fit in any program type category were included in the averages for all centers but excluded from the other categories.

TABLE 3a. BUDGET CHARACTERISTICS BY PROGRAM TYPE

		Wages/Hour Mean (All Staff)	Health Insurance		Paid Vacation 1+ day/yr.	Average Yearly Budget	% Budget Subsidized	Have Some Benefits Subsidy	% Teachers with High Rel.Educ.
			Full	Partial					
AVERAGE (ALL CENTERS)		$6.18	24%		43%	$ 63,000	19%	26%	60%
PUBLICALLY-SPONSORED		$7.34	51%	9%	44%	$144,000	42%	90%	73%
NON-PROFIT	COOP	$8.53	4%	0%	33%	$16,000	21%	5%	82%
NON-PROFIT	RELIGIOUS	$5.29	32%	9%	50%	$23,000	1%	44%	30%
NON-PROFIT	OTHER N-P	$5.69	19%	19%	53%	$91,000	20%	14%	50%
FOR-PROFIT		$4.63	0%	23%	17%	$64,000	4%	0%	50%

TABLE 3b. FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE CHARACTERISTICS BY PROGRAM TYPE

		% Full-Day Programs (5+ hrs/day)	Average Enrollment	Have Union	Have Board of Directors	Scholarships Available	Sliding Scale Fees	Average Years in Operation	Total in Study
AVERAGE (ALL CENTERS)		42%	49	8%	69%	57%	13%	15 years	71
PUBLICALLY-SPONSORED		36%	88	46%	20%	80%	20%	9 years	11
NON-PROFIT	COOP	5%	42	0%	100%	60%	5%	22 years	21
NON-PROFIT	RELIGIOUS	46%	39	0%	56%	38%	25%	13 years	11
NON-PROFIT	OTHER N-P	64%	44	0%	100%	36%	21%	15 years	14
FOR-PROFIT		90%	32	0%	13%	75%	0%	5 years	10

As can be seen from these figures, programs which have well-subsidized budgets pay better salaries and benefits and attract more trained personnel. Similarly, benefits are much better in centers with subsidized benefits.

CHILD CARE STAFF WORKING CONDITIONS PROJECT
Summary of Major Findings and Conclusions

As in other occupations with high proportions of female employees, child care staff members are subject to wage discrimination. Their low wages, benefits, and poor working conditions cause many people to leave the field despite the unusually high satisfaction they gain from working with children and parents. The turnover rate threatens continuity of care for children, and the retention of trained professionals who can maintain high-quality programming. A partial solution for keeping child care employees in the field has been identified; staff members' job commitment is strongly related to their participation in center decision-making.

EDUCATION Three-quarters of all teachers are college graduates, as are 85% of the directors. Almost half of the directors have masters' degrees or beyond. Perhaps the most remarkable finding in the study is that almost half of all staff members including assistants have the equivalent of a college degree with a child-care related major. Only 7% have no child-care related coursework.

WAGES The mean child care salary is $6.18 per hour (median $5.62). Directors and teacher-directors are paid $7.61 per hour (median $7.19), teachers $6.35 per hour (median $5.89), and assistants $4.57 per hour (median $4.44). Only 36% of all staff members feel that their salaries are adequate. The wages of child care professionals are approximately one-half those of the county's public school teachers at the same education level. More than three-quarters of all staff members are dependent on other sources of income.

Within the field, employees' education level is well-correlated with their child care wages. Staff members in co-op nursery schools and publically-sponsored programs are paid the highest salaries, while those in for-profit centers are paid least. Only thirty-seven percent of all centers raise salaries every year.

FRINGE BENEFITS More than half of all employees have no health insurance and no paid vacation time. Only onequarter of the centers offer any health insurance. Less than one-third of the centers pay for any vacation days. About three-quarters of employees receive no retirement benefits, dental or life insurance.

WORKING CONDITIONS Four out of five employees work some unpaid overtime; one out of five averages more than two hours of unpaid overtime every day. The higher the job level the more unpaid overtime. Fifty-seven percent of staff members who work more than 4 hours in a shift are not given any breaks, even though this is a violation of federal labor law.

Only thirty-eight percent of all employees have staff meetings once a week or more. Staff meetings improve working conditions by increasing communication, participation, and mutual support.

Although working conditions tend to be taxing, the non-monetary rewards of child care are great (see Job Satisfaction, below).

TURNOVER The most accurate measure of staff turnover in this study is the number of years that people have worked in their centers -- fifty-six percent have been in their present jobs for two years or less. One-quarter are looking for jobs with better salaries. The finding that almost half of all employees are under thirty also suggests that many people do not stay in the field for more than a few years.

JOB SATISFACTION The paradoxes of this field are most evident in the area of job satisfaction. At least 95% of all employees like their jobs and gain satisfaction from interacting with children and parents. Eighty-seven percent feel committed to their centers. On the other hand, only about one-third are satisfied with their salaries, benefits, or opportunities to progress in salary.

JOB COMMITMENT A number of items which are highly related to job commitment have been identified. Both positive and negative lessons can be learned from these findings. Since job dissatisfaction has been shown to predict turnover, these results give clues about what administrators can do to help staff members feel more valued and committed to their jobs. Suggested management practices which do not require additional funding include: to encourage employees to be involved in setting policy and taking responsibility; to provide open communication, flexibility, and personal support; and to keep staff members informed of what is going on.

THE CENTERS Sponsorship of child care takes many forms. Substantial differences are found in centers' financial and administrative characteristics, corresponding to sponsorship . Co-ops and publically-sponsored programs have well-educated teachers who are paid relatively high wages, although co-ops have extremely low fringes benefits. Private for-profit centers have the lowest wages and benefits. The amount of financial subsidy a program receives is clearly related to the wages and benefits it pays.

The community is well served by its highly trained and committed caregivers. But the child care system has been maintained at the expense of these employees -- many of them working for menial compensentation. Although the need for qualified teachers and directors is growing, staff members are increasingly dissatisfied with current conditions. Parents, especially low-income parents, can not afford to pay fees that support fair and appropriate wages. Employers, the community, and local, state, and national government must join us in guaranteeing affordable, good-quality care for our nation's children.

Co-Coordinators of the Working Conditions Project: Kathy Modigliani, Bill Kell, Thelma Valenstein, Margaret McDaniels, Cheryl Norton, Bess Manchester, Naomi Weber, and Janice Wheeler.

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MICHIGAN CHILD CARE FACT SHEET

Support for Child Care through the Michigan Department of Social Services

Title XX/Social Service Block Grant
Child Care Dollars[1]

1981	$21, 649, 171
1985	$5, 200, 000

Comparison with all states allotted more than $100,000,000 in Title XX/SSBG by the federal government to show use of the dollars for child care in 1985.[1]

State	Title XX $ received	Title XX $ used for child care	#Children served
Ca.	$286,713,437	$279,000,000	77,819
N.Y.	204,783,716	155,000,000	96,178
Tx.	177,195,491	33,658,793	13,319
Pa.	137,593,227	65,525,000	23,671
Ill.	132,757,460	41,160,000	17,198
O.	125,138,517	24,162,344	14,130
Fla.	120,789,806	36,095,065	26,500
Mi.	105,663,098	5,200,000	2,550

Title XX Child Care Reimbursement

Michigan reimburses Title XX child care center providers at the rate of $8.12 per day per child.

For a group of 10 children to 1 caregiver, the daily income from such reimbursement would be $81.20. Since a nine hour day is typical of center care, this sum is equivalent to $9.20 an hour. At most, salaries and benefits account for 80% of the income of a center. Therefore, $7.21 an hour would be the maximum amount available for the salaries and benefits of the caregiver and administrative personnel.

In 1985, 34 states paid more to center providers (Indiana, $9.50; Georgia, $9.80; Illinois, $11.72; Massachusetts, $13.50; California, $17.98 a day) than did Michigan .[1]

Michigan has no Dependent Care Tax Credit or Deduction to supplement the federal program as do 29 other states.

AFDC Child Care

The federal government cut the Title XX/SSBG funds in 1981. The very poor working families who had been receiving child care support from these funds in Michigan no longer received such support. Instead, a maximum of $160 per child per month of earned income could be disregarded in calculating their AFDC benefits. At best, the $1920 a year will buy only the lowest cost preschool child care.

Michigan provides support for child care to:

- Single parents who are not eligible for AFDC and who earn up to 80% of Michigan's median family income (80% of $28,125 or $22,500 in 1985) on a sliding scale basis.

- Young parents under 21, regardless of income, to help them finish high school, adult basic education, or acquire a GED.

- Parents participating in employment training programs.

- Parents of high risk children and those recommended for Protective Services.

Funds are used to partially support a network of Child Care Information and Referral Services.

Including the estimated number of families using the AFDC Income Disregard for child care, Michigan supported the child care of fewer children in 1985 than it did in 1981.

[1] Children's Defense Fund

Child Care Staff Working Conditions Project, a task force of the Washtenaw Association for the Education of Young Children

Editorial:

Crisis in Child Care

Mothers are entering the labor force in unprecedented numbers and well trained child care professionals are reluctantly leaving the field. Many can support neither themselves nor their families on their child care income. The imbalance is taking a crucial turn. Who will care for our children if the nation continues to lose child care professionals to expanding opportunities in public school teaching, business and industry?

Although the level of education of caregivers is higher than the national average, their wages are in the lowest 5% of all workers. The average wage in day care centers is below the Department of Labor poverty line. A child care professional earns about one half the salary of a public school teacher with comparable training. Most child care professionals receive no health insurance, no paid vacations, no sick days and no retirement benefits.

In 1980 , the turnover rate of child care center staff was almost 42% compared to the 10% in the rest of the human service field. We cannot afford this loss.

Quality child care cannot be maintained unless more funds are put into the child care system- funds that will improve salaries and benefits and reduce the high turnover rate. Why can't parents pay higher fees to help change the situation? Some can but the majority cannot. Employers are discovering that support of child care reduces absenteeism and turnover, increasing productivity. However, very few employers have been willing to bear the cost of child care. What about government involvement? Federal and state investments in child care have been shown to be amply repaid in increased tax revenues from working parents and caregivers. Yet, federal funding for child care has been drastically cut. In most states funding for child care is below 1981 levels. Greater, not less, funding is needed now to support the care of our children.

Child care professionals have demonstrated their ability to provide rich developmental programs for children as they support parents in their effort to be self sustaining. They cannot and should not be expected to continue to subsidize the child care system by low wages and poor benefits.

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Child Care Working Conditions Project, a task force of the Washtenaw Association for the Education of Young Children

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Washtenaw County Association for the Education of Young Children

CHILD CARE STAFF WORKING CONDITIONS PROJECT

Facts about the Survey for Teachers and Directors

Spring, 1984

WHAT IS THE SURVEY AND WHO IS DOING IT?

This survey, sponsored by the Washtenaw County Association for the Education of Young Children (WCAEYC) is concerned with the salaries, working conditions, and the quality of worklife of teachers and directors employed in all Washtenaw County early childhood programs. The Child Care Staff Working Conditions Project was formed as part of a national effort to explore ways of improving working conditions and status of people working with young children. Both the National and Michigan Associations for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC and MiAEYC) have given grants in support of this project.

WHO IS ASKED TO PARTICIPATE?

Every paid teaching staff member and director in a full or part time child care center or nursery school in Washtenaw County will be asked to participate. This is approximately 500 directors, teachers, and teacher aides in 82 programs.

HOW WILL THE SURVEY BE CONDUCTED?

Each center will be assigned a project liaison. This person will work with the director and a designated staff representative to inform the staff about the project, to distribute the surveys and collect them after one week.

WHY IS THIS SURVEY IMPORTANT?

The quality of child care is of concern to a broad section of our society today. Families are using out-of-home child care more than ever before. Recent research has identified the importance of the quality of a child's early environment.

There are many factors which contribute to the quality of an early childhood program -- one of the most important is the staff. Very little information is available about people working in child care centers and nursery schools -- their worklives, their needs, and possible improvements that could be made to better support them in their work with young children.

In response to this lack of information, WCAEYC is conducting a survey as part of a national effort to look for ways to improve working conditions, salaries, benefits, and status of staff members in early childhood programs. Similar surveys have been or are being conducted in other parts of the country. Their results are attracting attention not only from the child care community, but also from parents, media, and policy makers.

The support of quality early childhood programs needs more attention than teachers, directors, and parents alone are able to give. A first step toward increased community attention and support is to inform the public about the situation of people providing this important service.

WHAT ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY?

The identity of the directors and teachers completing the surveys, as well as the identity of their centers will NOT be revealed at any stage of the collection of information or the publication of results. The WCAEYC Child Care Staff Working Conditions Project is committed to absolute confidentiality for participants in the survey.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WITH THE RESULTS?

WCAEYC intends to make the results available to the child care community and the general public by:

- -initiating a dialogue within our own child care community on ways to upgrade our status and improve working conditions with the limited resources currently available.
- -presenting to parents, community members and policy makers an accurate picture of the status and working conditions of child care staff members. At the local and state level, WCAEYC will sponsor workshops, develop handouts, publish articles in local media, and arrange speaking engagements. Nationally, the results will be added to those from other communities, contributing to public awareness about child care.
- -providing NAEYC with information to assist this organization in its efforts to promote the early childhood profession and high quality child care.

wcaeyc

Washtenaw County Association for the Education of Young Children

CHILD CARE STAFF WORKING CONDITIONS PROJECT

National Association for the Education of Young Children
1983-84 MAG Grant

FINAL REPORT

Narrative

The goal of the WCAEYC Child Care Staff Working Conditions Project is to determine the relationship between staff characteristics, working conditions and attitudes, and the quality of worklife in child care centers and nursery schools. Please read the attached Brochure for an overview of the project.

I. Results

The following outcomes and products have been accomplished:

Over 50 volunteers participated in the design and implementation of the project. These people included teachers, directors, information and referral staff members, university professors, professional survey researchers, and other child advocates. Agencies which contributed staff time, materials, and other resources included the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research, Child Care Coordinating and Referral Service (Washtenaw County 4-C's), the University of Michigan School of Education, and High/Scope Educational Research Foundation. This, combined with the support of the local and state AEYC affiliates, produced a heterogeneous, effective project with well- rooted community support.

(Since writing the proposal for this MAG grant, we have expanded the scope of the project. Two changes were important. A census was done of every preschool child care center and nursery school in the county, resulting in an 89% response rate for potential participating programs. The scope of the study was expanded to include job satisfaction and quality of worklife issues.)

Outcomes -- In terms of *outcomes*, two complementary questionnaires were developed and distributed. Seventy-four licensed child care and nursery programs have participated in the survey, out of a possible eighty-three in Washtenaw County. Three hundred and seventy-three teachers and directors received the "Teacher/Director Questionnaire" (see attached), which asked about their responsibilities, compensation, job satisfaction and other aspects of their work. In addition, seventy-four "Center Profile Questionnaires" (see attached) were distributed, which gathered information about local programs including staffing, budget, parent involvement, and other characteristics.

The return rate is approximately 80 percent, for which credit goes to our use of highly skilled volunteers and our personalized survey implementation approach. The deadline for returning questionnaires is October 15.

Products -- In terms of *products,* the following materials (attached) were developed and used by the project.

Survey Instruments. The two questionnaires used in the survey were designed and pretested through a careful and lengthy process. These questionnaires were designed to gather detailed information about directors' and teachers' worklives and the programs in which they are employed.

Publicity and Communication Materials. An explanatory brochure and several introductory and follow-up letters were developed for the participating child care programs.

Volunteer Training Materials. Written materials supplemented training sessions which prepared volunteers to serve as effective liaisons to the different centers and nursery schools.

Documentation System. A detailed documentation system was developed to monitor the different elements of the survey during the course of the project.

Finally, while not exactly a product, possibly the most important effect locally was a project that actively encouraged teachers and directors, often for the first time, to dialogue about their jobs and ways to improve their ability to give quality care to children.

II. Procedures

A. Activities and Resources

Recruitment of Task Force Members. Following the NAEYC Conference of November, 1982, a Washtenaw County Task Force on Child Care Staff Working Conditions was established. The Project Coordinators (see attached list) were instrumental in writing the MAG proposal and recruiting task force members at WCAEYC meetings, monthly meetings of the Child Care Directors' Support Group, in Child Care Coordinating and Referral Service newsletter articles, and by inviting persons directly. The volunteers on the attached list resulted from these efforts.

Meetings of Project Coordinators were, and continue to be, held on a regular basis. The roles and activities of the coordinators have changed as the project has developed. The coordinators have been responsible for setting up and chairing committees (e.g., the Data Analysis and Dissemination Teams) as they are needed, as well as keeping the membership of AEYC informed about the progress of the project. The Child Care Coordinating and Referral Service (CCCRS) contributed five hours a week of one of the coordinators work time for one year.

Literature Review. An initial literature review of relevant studies---including the National Day Care Center Study, the Child Care Employee Project Study, the Quinn Quality of Employment Study, and the Hostetler and Klugman study were reviewed and provided the base for the development of the survey questions and format. In addition, questions from a Public Agenda study of job satisfaction and productivity, which distinguished between rewards which motivate a worker to work harder (motivators) and those that make workers more satisfied (satisfiers), were included. Because these two goals (job satisfaction and productivity) are not causally linked, we thought it important to determine how they operate in the child care setting. An ERIC search of relevant literature was also made and will be most useful in providing contextual material for the dissemination reports.

Determining survey questions. A series of meetings of Task Force volunteers were held to discuss aspects of our own working conditions we thought important to include in a survey. Although many issues raised were already incorporated in earlier surveys, a number of new and important issues (e.g., the total number of children a caregiver was responsible for during the course of a day) surfaced and were later included in the survey questions.

A University of Michigan work-study student took detailed notes at these meetings. He identified areas which could be replicated from other surveys, and new issues raised by the group that were not included in previous studies.

Following the literature review and analysis as well as the early group meetings, a subgroup of the task force met from April - August, 1983 to design the survey. In September, 1983, two Task Force coordinators incorporated the results of these meetings into a first draft of the questionnaires which became the Center Profile and the Teacher-Director Questionnaire.

Consultation with Advisory Board members followed. The board (see attached list) was instrumental in reviewing the survey, rewording questions and so designing the instruments that the information collected could be stored and analyzed by the computer system available at the University of Michigan.

Pilot testing of the survey questionnaires was done in December of 1983. On the basis of this testing, the questionnaires were revised.

Liaison recruitment and training. A project coordinator developed training materials to assist the volunteers who would contact, distribute and collect questionnaires from each of the centers. The volunteers who served as center liaisons were recruited from Task Force members, the larger WCAEYC membership, and the child care community. Training of the liaison volunteers took place in March, 1983.

Contact with centers. Many center directors learned about the study from WCAEYC or CCCRS meetings or the Child Care Directors' Support Group monthly meetings. In addition, a letter was sent to each center or nursery school director explaining the Working Conditions Project and requesting an on-site visit by one of the Task Force Liaison volunteers, who explained the survey procedure and distributed the questionnaires to the designated staff representative. A project coordinator was responsible for scheduling the center visits and making necessary materials ready and available to the liaison volunteers.

Survey Administration. The distribution and collection of the questionnaires took place between April and August, 1984.

Data Analysis. In August, 1984 a Data Analysis Team including university experts was established to define the tasks needed to complete the data

analysis and to identify volunteers who might assist in carrying out these tasks. Advisory board experts in data analysis and volunteers who want to learn survey research skills are working together effectively to accomplish these goals. The data from all the Teacher-Director Questionnaires have been entered on the computer and are ready for analysis. The data from the Center Profile Questionnaires are being coded for computer entry.

Additional funding from the Washtenaw County AEYC ($200) and the Michigan AEYC ($250) has supplemented the MAG Grant, contributing to keypunching, copying, and other additional expenses. The UofM Children's Center has contributed $75 of computer time.

Dissemination. The Dissemination Team was established in June, 1984, to determine how we might share our results. Although most tasks must wait until analysis is completed, we have been a.) identifying groups and individuals to receive survey results, b.) determining format of materials to be prepared, and c.) assembling relevant background materials, statistics and information about the context within which the survey was conducted.

We are continuing to keep a positive focus during this important phase of the project. All groups -- parents, child care administrators and teachers, and the public at large -- must join together to seek creative solutions to the challenge of providing high quality care for our children.

B. Most Successful Activities

1. The well-designed survey and high response rate have yielded rich, high quality data. A core of volunteers has worked for more than a year, carefully tending to the details of every step of the study. Child care professionals have been aided by academic experts, who helped with questionnaire construction, and are now guiding the analysis of the data.

2. The high level of participation of the child care community has taken several forms: discussing and shaping the questions that the survey addresses; serving as liaisons or center representatives; and discussing ways to address the problems raised. We have been gratified by strong positive support. Directors and teachers alike have been willing to take a close look at their jobs. While there are no easy solutions to some of the problems identified, there is an excitement in Washtenaw County that we have started to deal with the problems and will be able to use our study to inform parents and the community of our situations.

The ease of recruiting volunteers as well as the high response rate of participants in the study is due to the immediate relevance of the survey. *These are very compelling issues; people are interested in and concerned about the quality of work life of child care employees.*

3. The WCAEYC Child Care Staff Working Conditions Project was in all respects a major undertaking. It necessitated the formation of an organization of over 50 volunteers from the child care community and other local organizations. Each volunteer usually had a particular skill or important contact in the community.

4. Michigan AEYC has supported our efforts financially. Recently they asked one of our coordinators to serve as Chairperson on the MiAEYC Board of a new committee on Salaries, Status, and Working Conditions. Thus our efforts are beginning to involve the state child care community and foster other local projects.

III. Replication: Suggestions to Other Groups

Two aspects of the survey project should be particularly noted, for those wishing to replicate the project in their community:

*A. **Working with volunteers.** Avoid the child care professional's tendency to think small -- thinking big has brought us big results in terms of volunteer contributions.*

Crucial to the success of the project, there were many pitfalls to avoid here. Several suggestions toward successful volunteer involvement:

1. Screen and place volunteers carefully; assess their skills and commitment and make an effective match with project tasks.

2. Train volunteers well, especially if their job is to represent your project to other people. Familiarize them with all aspects of the survey and delineate clearly their responsibilities. Include opportunities for learning through demonstration. Allow a good amount of time for volunteers to ask questions and discuss their concerns..

3. Make arrangements that keep volunteers in close contact with the coordinators during survey implementation.

4. Keep careful track of the status of each unit of the project. Be ready to troubleshoot and provide back-up support wherever needed.

B. Work toward wide participation from the beginning. Because of the delicate nature of gathering information about people's jobs, it is important to begin early on public relations and use all contacts and resources available. This includes:

1. Involve the local AEYC affiliate through officers, workshops, newsletters, and/or the creation of a task force.

2. Begin several months in advance to talk about the survey in meetings of directors, teachers, and with individuals, so that people have many opportunities to ask questions and make suggestions before they have to decide whether to participate.

3. Use local media resources to publicize and legitimize the survey, including child care newsletters, area newspapers, and local events where many child care people might gather.

4. If it is anticipated that a particular teacher or director might be apprehensive about participating, invite that person to be involved in the development and implementation planning, so that her concerns may be aired. This allows for representation of all points of view and the resolution of conflict when possible.

5. Pair volunteers and directors who are acquainted with each other to increase the personal contact. Carefully pair the skill levels of volunteers with the difficulty of the task, using your strongest volunteers with the centers that might require more discussion.

6. *Always keep the project positive. Actively oppose any tendency for factionalism or antagonism in the child care community* (e.g., between teachers and directors, between non-profit and proprietary centers). Give the project a name that emphasizes the issue in a positive, unifying way. Focus on the goal of gathering data about the child care profession in order to increase our own understanding and public awareness about the important service we provide, and identify ways to improve the quality of child care worklife, which will improve the quality of child care.

IV. Future Activities

Two major steps of the project remain:

A. **Data Analysis** -- At this time, the approximately 350 Teacher/Director Questionnaires have been entered on the University of Michigan MTS data file and are ready for analysis. The Center Profile Questionnaires are now being edited. This extensive data file (including approximately 136,000 bits of information) will be analyzed using the OSIRIS statistical program. Results and information gained will then be forwarded to the Dissemination Committee.

B. **Dissemination** -- A Dissemination Team of ten volunteers has assembled background materials which will be useful in writing the survey results. Plans have been made for developing the following dissemination materials:

1. A Summary of Results, and a Research Report (which will be sent to the NAEYC accreditation project, University faculty, and others)

2. Articles to be submitted to Young Children, Child Care Quarterly, Daycare, Working Mother, Children Today

3. Press Packets will be sent to the New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, Christian Science Monitor, Newsweek, Time, Ms., Child Care Information Exchange, and all Washtenaw County, Michigan newspapers.

4. Handouts and workshops will be prepared for:
   Parents
   Child Care / Nursery School Teachers and Directors
   Policy Makers

5. Presentations will be made to community agencies and policy makers. They will be asked to join in a discussion of how our community can improve the quality of worklife of child care professionals, and in turn the quality of child care.

Design services for the dissemination materials will be donated by Group 243.